SONIC AND VISUAL EXPERIENCE AND EXTENDED TECHNIQUES IN CLASSICAL GUITAR PERFORMANCE

A CASE STUDY OF

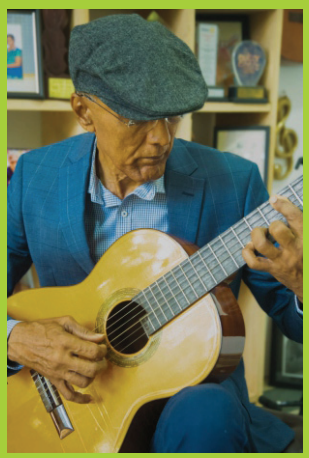
AMARANATH RANATUNGA

A THESIS BY

KASUN DULSHAN GAYATHRA
DASSANAYAKE BASNAYAKE RALALAGE

Submitted to the Graduate and Professional School of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS



August 2025

Major Subject: Performance Studies

Texas A&M University
College Station, USA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the connection of sonic and visual environment experiences in classical guitar performance through a case study of Amaranath Ranatunga's use of extended techniques. Extended techniques in classical music are often analyzed in terms of categorization based on source of sound production, use of notation and playing technique. There is a significant research gap in understanding how a performer's experience with their sonic and visual environments translates into distinct musical techniques. The classical guitar is a musical instrument capable of producing mellow and rich sounds, with a wide range of tonal qualities and dynamics. Amaranath Ranatunga, a pioneering Sri Lankan classical guitarist, pushes the boundaries of traditional guitar performance by incorporating innovative percussive elements, harmonics, and unconventional hand movements. His philosophy in creating a unique guitar playing style makes his performance go beyond auditory experience. He produces both note-based and sound-based music, thereby he creates a captivating soundscape from the surrounding environment. The research highlights that music is not limited to note-based music but includes sounds that fall beyond musical notes emerging from everyday sounds and timbers that surround us. Herein, the analysis of Ranatunga's performances; *Earth, Wind, Water and Fire, Beyond the Triangle, and Echo in a Forest* demonstrate the relationship between his sonic and visual environment and the artistic inspiration in the creation of innovative extended techniques.

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Kasun Dassanayake

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Ludwig van Beethoven once remarked, “The classical guitar is a miniature orchestra within itself. This statement resonates deeply with my journey as a musician. I have been fortunate to learn many instruments. I enjoyed the piano for its melodic sound, mastered the double bass for its rich bass tones, explored percussion through drums, and developed a sense of harmony through vocal training. However, learning how to play the guitar allowed me to combine, all these various musical elements I had acquired from playing other instruments. In Sri Lanka, where I lived, I was fortunate to find a remarkable guitar teacher who became my mentor and guide and influenced my understanding of the different potentials of the classical guitar. His innovative approach in use of extended techniques (I will define this later) in his performance and his passion for the guitar instrument helped me realize its capabilities, especially its ability to engage the mind and senses on multiple levels. I learned and performed extended techniques which is a non-traditional method of employing the musical instrument to obtain unusual sounds for the classical guitar.

In my musical journey, I used to follow note-based music that follows a musical notation and melodic structures. However, as I explored deeper into music, I discovered the concept of sound-based music, which focuses on texture and sound production. I was particularly interested in finding sound-based music and its connection to the classical guitar. In classical guitar performances, sound-based music can be produced using extended techniques. Initially, I explored more about extended techniques and compared how artist’s employ them in their performance. I learned that these extended techniques are broadly relate with production of different sounds. Then, I began to explore the artist’s inspiration to create different sounds, and I understood how deeply those sounds are shaped with human experiences. Accordingly, I wanted to analyze these sounds and identify their connection to music. I discovered that

musicians incorporate everyday sounds they hear into their performances. A Sri Lankan classical and flamenco guitarist Amaranath Ranatunga uses extended techniques into his performances. His journey as a classical guitarist has been documented through video archives, interviews, scholarly articles and book publications. This provided me with an opportunity to analyze the Ranathunga's relationship between sonic and visual experience and his use of extended techniques. Therefore, this study aims to illuminate how Ranatunga's innovative approaches to the guitar challenge conventional playing methods and offer new possibilities for musical expression.

In the second chapter, I will provide a comprehensive overview of classical guitar and its extended techniques, detailing the evolution of the instrument and the various methods employed by guitarists to expand its expressive range. I will demonstrate how these innovations not only enhance the tonal palette of the guitar but also reflect the broader musical landscape.

The third chapter will discover how everyday environments through both sound and visuals shape musical expression. R. Murray Schafer's concept of the soundscape, examine how natural and human-made sounds influence our perception of place and inspire artistic responses. The chapter also considers visual elements as part of this sensory experience, showing how they contribute to the emotions and creativity. These ideas allow us to understand the connection of artistic inspiration through sound based extended techniques and therefore how musicians and artists engage with their surroundings in meaningful and innovative ways.

The focus of the fourth chapter will be on Amaranath Ranatunga himself; I will highlight how Ranatunga's background, philosophy, cultural influences, and personal experiences contribute to his unique sound production. And I will closely examine his specific use of extended techniques and the innovative soundscapes he constructs. This chapter will serve as a case study that exemplifies the research problem through a detailed analysis of selected performances.

As sound-based music gains more recognition, there is a significant knowledge gap in the field regarding how specific sonic and visual experiences translate into musical techniques (Vishnick 144). This research aims to understand the connection of use of extended techniques in classical guitar performance can serve as a medium for expressing complex artist's sonic and visual experiences. This connection reveals how music can become a bridge between our lives, our experiences, and the environments that shape us.

As a classical guitarist, I am inspired by Ranatunga's unique techniques and the sounds he creates that connect with his environment. My analysis considers both the performers and the audience's perspectives. This study does not focus on the technical aspects of extended techniques such as how to use them in compositions, perform them, or notate them using standard musical notation, present in existing literature (Lunn, Vishnick). Instead, I explore how an artist's inspiration and connection to their environment can shape and enhance their musical virtuosity with the incorporation of unique and innovative extended techniques.

CHAPTER II

CLASSICAL GUITAR AND EXTENDED TECHNIQUES

Evolution of Classical Guitar

Guitar scholars such as Harvey Turnbull, Grahm Wade and James Tyler traced the evolution of the classical guitar from 1500 BC onwards. The earliest known guitar-like instrument was a long-necked guitar-shaped instrument played by musicians in Hittite settlement in Turkey. However, the Persian tanbur, which is a string instrument with a long-fretted neck and bowl-shaped body, gained popularity in 1400 BC. The word guitar derives from the Persian words char-tar ("char" meaning "four" and "tar" meaning string") because the early instruments had four strings. Later, char-tar evolved into the word guitarra in Spain. During the 16th century the four-stringed Spanish vihuela, which has a body shape similar to that of the modern guitar, and the lute, which has a bowl-shaped body, dominated Spain and Portugal. By the late 17th century, both the lute and the vihuela were not in as much use in Europe as before. Furthermore, the lute had become an overly complex instrument to play due to excessive string additions (Summerfield 2). The five-course guitar also known as baroque guitar and introduced by Vicente Espinel, comprised nine strings of varying thickness, one string in the first course and two strings on each of the other four courses, (Murphy 49).[1] This development with the overly complex nature of the instrument led to the vihuela's decline by the late 18th century. The golden age of the guitar started around 1780 in Spain and Italy with the emergence of the six-string guitar (Summerfield 3). German luthier (maker/repairer of stringed instruments) Jakob August Otto is credited as the first person to make the six-string guitar. Most European countries had given up on six-course and five-course guitars in favor of six-string guitars. In the early 19th century, a further development of the guitar was in the internal structure of the instrument and, particularly, the invention of

[1]For example, a nine-string baroque guitar has five courses, most of which consist of two strings, though occasionally the lowest or highest course is a single string.

fan strutting. Fan strutting refers to a specific pattern of internal arrangement within the structure of the guitar where wooden struts and stripes are arranged in a fan-like shape, spreading outwards from the center of the guitar, providing structural support while allowing freer vibration at the top of the guitar (See fig 1). This improved the guitar's sound and structural integrity and gave it a richer tone (Bogdanovich 11).

One of Spain's greatest exponents of six-string classical guitar was Fernando Sor (1778-1839). Sor's active involvement with new ideas in performance technique and musical composition helped establish the foundations of classical guitar performance (Summerfield 7). Born in Barcelona, Spain, he mastered various instruments, including piano, organ, and violin, at a monastery in Montserrat, a Caribbean Island. He was influenced by the Italian guitarist Federico Morretti to study guitar in-depth after Morretti's music helped him to realize the potential of playing both melody and accompaniment on guitar. Sor's mastery of multiple instruments notwithstanding, he initially saw himself as a composer of orchestral music and his deep understanding of composition led to his more sophisticated approach to writing music for the guitar. He initially used guitar for accompaniment but later developed it as a solo instrument, becoming one of Spain's most influential guitarists (Rattanai 5).

Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829), also a cellist, is another important six string classical guitarist. He was born in Bisceglie, Italy. Little is known about his early life, except that he studied counterpoint as a teenager and was an accomplished musician by the age of eighteen. In Italy, the guitar was mainly used for vocal accompaniment so in 1806, Guiliani moved to Vienna, where instrumental music was highly valued and there was already a strong tradition of solo guitar performance. He quickly gained fame. Beyond his solo works, he collaborated with leading musicians of his time, including Beethoven in 1808, pianist Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and violinist Joseph Mayseder showcasing the guitar's adaptability in ensembles. His contributions effected the guitar's popularity in Vienna, setting a new standard for guitar composition in the early 19th century. His contributions to opera, chamber music, and larger ensembles helped elevate

the guitar's status, firmly establishing it as a respected and versatile instrument (Rattanai 6). Unfortunately, the guitar's popularity and development slowed down as orchestral and keyboard instruments took over the spotlight for a while in the 19th century.

Later in Spain, the classical guitar saw a major revival. Luthier Antonio de Torres Jurado developed the new version of the instrument in 1856 by giving it a larger body, with a wider fingerboard, and with advanced fan strutting of five to seven struts (depending on the size of the guitar) arranged in a fan like structure and two more struts placed diagonally below them (Summerfield 5). Torres' symmetrical arrangement of struts produced a kite like structure, when arranged harmonically on a thinner sound board, strikingly improved the overall sound quality of the classical guitar (Mores 148). Another important figure in the development of the classical guitar was the Spanish guitarist Francisco Tárrega (1852-1909). He was originally a skilled pianist but later became famous for his guitar playing. In 1869, as a young musician, Tárrega went to visit the guitar maker Torres to get a new instrument. Torres was so impressed after hearing Tárrega play, and he offered him his own best guitar. Tárrega realized that the techniques of playing the guitar had to be altered to accommodate the larger body and shape that Torres had developed for the guitar (i.e., the guitar we see today). He decided that the body of the guitar should rest on the left thigh and the player's left leg should be raised with the help of a footstool. This raises the neck of the guitar whose wider shape allows better placement of the fingers on the fingerboard (Summerfield 7) (refer figure 1). Tárrega was a pioneer in transcribing, for the guitar, music originally written for other instruments by composers such as Ferdinando Carulli (1770-1841), Wenzel Thomas Matiegka (1773-1830), Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829), Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) (Summerfield 7, Apichai 7). Tárrega composed original pieces, and travelled to several European countries including France, Italy, and England. Additionally, he helped expand the expressive range of the modern classical guitar through extended techniques (the non-standard method of playing instrument that I will discuss at length later) in his composition

Gran Jota (Marrington 12). He contributed to the 20th century guitar performance as the founder of the modern guitar school that inspired young guitarists such as Emilio Pujol (1886-1980) and Miguel Llobet (1878-1938). His students Emilio and Miguel travelled to expand the audience for the guitar in Europe and America (Summerfield 7).

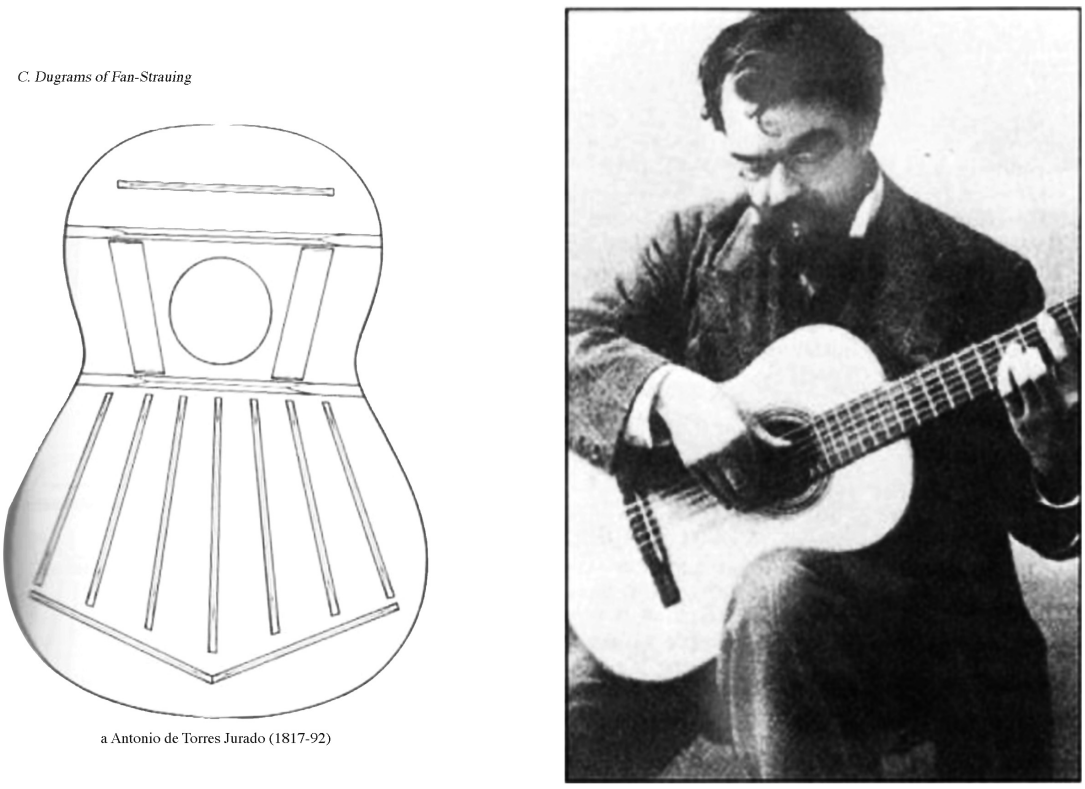

Figure 1: Advanced fan strutting by Antoni Torres and Francisco Tarrega's developed posture. Reprinted from The Classical Guitar: Its Evolution, Players and Personalities Since 1800 by Summerfield. Used under fair use for educational and analytical purposes.

Evolution of Extended Techniques of Classical Guitar

During the Renaissance (15th -16th century), almost every great European composer was a great performer es exemplified by musicians such as John Dowland (1563-1626) a composer and a lutenist and Luis de Milán (1500-1561) a vihuelist and a composer. However, the music that people composed grew more complex over time, it developed from monophonic-single line melodies to polyphonic-multiple melodic lines sung or played together and then to more structured music such as symphonies concertos and expanded to harmonics[2] (Gallardo 2018). Composing complex music and performing a variety of instruments became time consuming for the musician: individuals no longer were able to easily have a career of both composing and performing music. This established a distinct division between composer and performer. However, this division also inaugurated a new relationship: one in which the performer and composer worked together to produce and perform new music (Cano 9).

Into the 20th century virtuoso guitarists like Andrés Segovia (1893-1987) and Leo Brouwer (1939-present) made significant contributions that reshaped the classical guitar's role and led into its greatest years (Summerfield 9). Andrés Segovia admired Francisco Tárrega as his role model and was inspired by Tárrega's guitar performance. Segovia dedicated his time and energy for almost 80 years to giving the guitar a reputation matching any other classical instruments such as piano, violin etc. (Summerfield 10). He travelled and presented guitar concerts to many audiences to extend the instrument's repertoire. His playing style influenced other contemporary guitarists such as Julian Bream (1933-2020) and John Williams (1941-Present). He worked with guitar makers such as the Ramirez family and luthier Albert Augustine in 1947 to further improve the quality of the guitar's sound and volume and to incorporate the use of nylon strings (Summerfield 11). Segovia encouraged prominent non-guitarist composers such as Joaquin Turina (1882-1949), Albert Roussel (1869-1937) to write for guitar. His efforts were successful because these composers didn't focus on the

[2] Harmonics are series of notes that are higher pitched sounds or frequency that accompany a fundamental note

technical limits of the guitar. This led to a more creative and unique guitar music, introducing new sounds that had never been heard on the instrument before (Apichai 13).

Leo Brouwer is a Cuban modern classical guitarist regarded as a maestro. He grew up with a musical background: his father was an amateur guitarist. He was exposed to music and began composing music on the guitar early in his life. He got the chance to attend the Havana Conservatory and later pursued advanced studies at the Juilliard School in New York and the Hartt School of Music in Connecticut. Leo Brouwer has been an innovative classical guitar composer, performer, conductor, and educator who has tried to push the boundaries of guitar composition by fusing African Cuban ritual music and advanced compositional techniques. He inspired contemporary musicians worldwide such as John Willams where he performed and recorded Brouwer's work like *El Decameron Negro and Elogio de la Danza.* In the1960s and 1970s, Brouwer started experimenting with atonal music which doesn't have a clear tone or key and tried to expand the capabilities of the guitar. In his composition "Canticum" (1968) he employs a variety of modern techniques including percussive effects, opening and ending rasgueado (will discuss this later) and sections of unusual harmonic structures to create a work different from other compositions (Kronenberg 30-46).

Among many classical guitar performers and composers, Andres Segovia and Leo Brouwer are pioneers who have been actively involved in expanding classical guitar's sound capabilities and the recognition of the classical guitar as a versatile instrument. Their immense efforts to expand the tradition of classical guitar playing and educate guitarists worldwide has influenced artists of today. One of those artists is Amaranath Ranatunga, a Sri Lankan classical guitar composer and performer. Ranatunga is inspired by these legendary classical guitarists mentioned above and their beautiful compositions, to bring a fresh perspective to creating non-standard music and to producing unique sounds from the guitar instrument.

Extended Techniques of Classical Guitar

Today, the classical guitar is a prominent instrument in classical music designed with distinct parts. The three main parts of a classical guitar are the *headpiece, a neck made from mahogany and cedar, and the body crafted from spruce and cedar wood.* The *six strings* of the guitar are stretched along the glued-on surface of the long and narrow neck of the guitar. This glued-on surface, the *fingerboard,* has metal strips or *frets* that divide it into fixed segments, each segment representing a musical note. The neck is attached, at its top end, to the headpiece of the guitar. On the headpiece, each string is attached to a roller (wound by a tuner/tuning pegs) that tunes the strings. The neck is attached, at its bottom end, to the body of the guitar. The body is primarily responsible for amplifying the sound of vibrating strings. The fingerboard of the neck extends to the soundboard, the upper surface of the body of the guitar. The bridge connects the strings to the *soundboard,* which has a circular opening about four inches in diameter called the sound hole. The sound hole is located at the middle of the body of the guitar. Over the soundboard, the vibrations of the strings, created by the performer's stroking motion, resonates with the body, and generates sound by displacing the air inside the body outward through the sound hole. (Bogdanovich 9-10) (Refer to Figure 2).

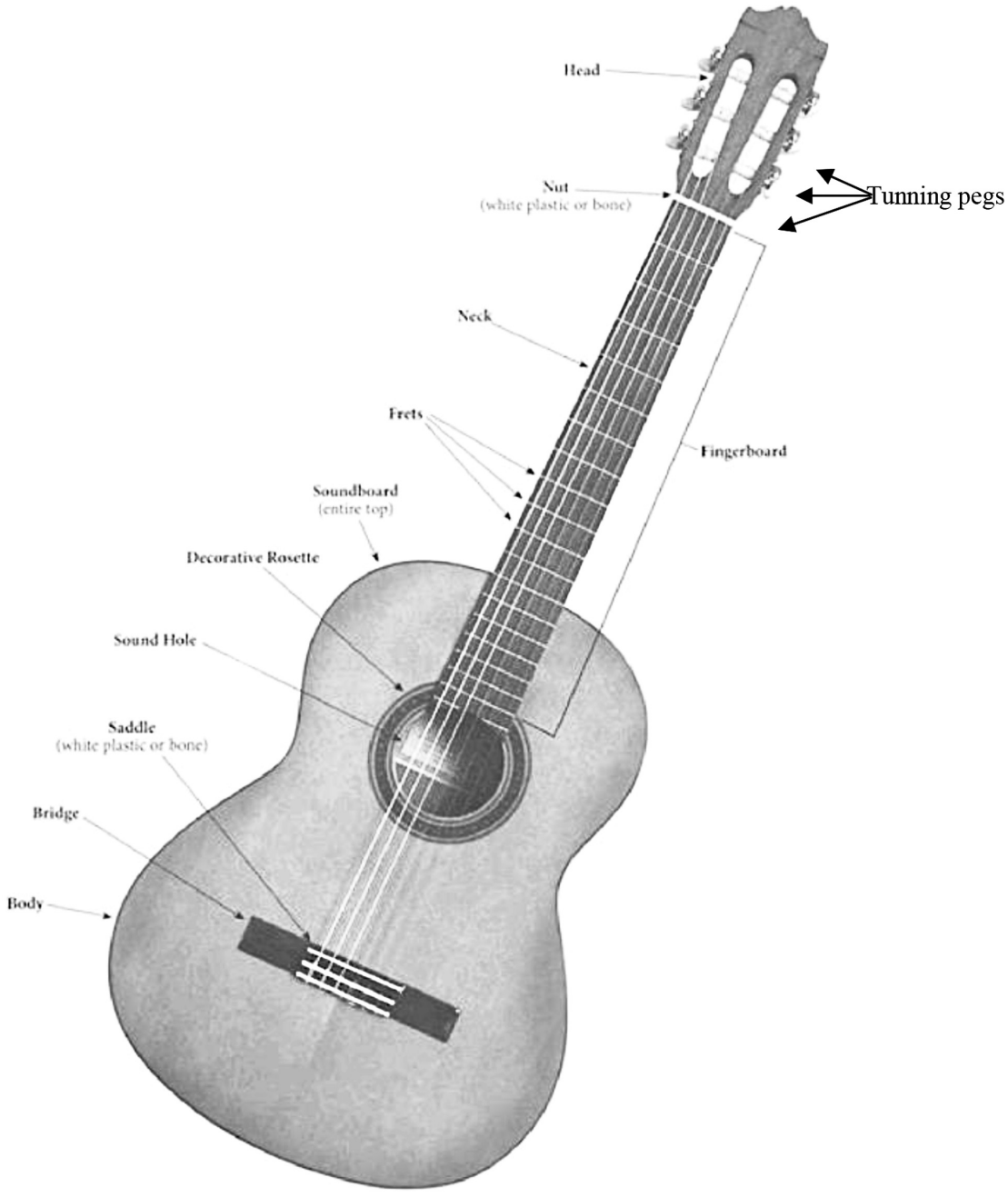

Figure 2: Anatomy of classical guitar. Reprinted from the book A Modern Approach to Classical Guitar (Music Instruction) by Duncan Charles. Used under fair use for educational and analytical purposes

As a beloved instrument steeped in tradition, the guitar has long been associated with specific techniques and repertoire. The performer of classical guitar plays the instrument in sitting position with four points of bodily contact with the instrument: the chest, the top of the left thigh, the inside of the right thigh and the right forearm, all to secure the instrument, provide stability for the performer, and allow for a relaxed performance (Duncan 9). The classical

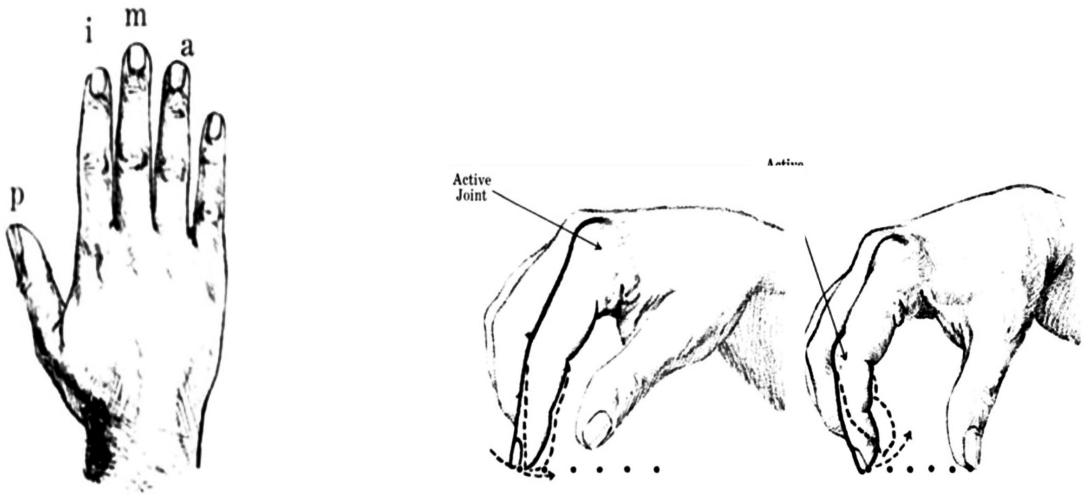

Figure 3: Right-hand finger names, rest stroke and free stroke. Reprinted from the book Guitar Method-Volume 1: The Art and Technique of the Classical Guitar by Christopher Parkening. Used under fair use for educational and analytical purposes

guitarist's journey often involves mastering fingerstyle playing, in which the performer only plucks the guitar strings with the fingertips, following the written music (Lunn 1). In the illustration of the techniques below, the right-hand thumb of the performer is represented by the letter "p" (pulgar), the index finger by "i" (indice), the middle finger by "m" (media), and the ring finger by "a" (anular). (Refer figure 3). The guitarist's right hand is the hand of expression and is positioned towards the lower end or in the middle of the sound hole while maintaining a natural arch. This arch is formed with the forearm and hand at the wrist. There are two methods to strike a string: *rest stroke* and *free stroke*. A performer may make a *rest stroke* with the fingers of the right hand or *thumb strike* with the thumb on the string and then rest against the next string (Parkening

16-17). The left hand of the guitarist is the hand of technique and holds, grasps or carries the guitar. Usually, the fingers, arm, and wrist of the left-hand work together in a natural and efficient posture to help the guitarist play comfortably and accurately. The hand is aligned 12 parallel to the fingerboard while the first and fourth fingers are inward slanted (Duncan 9, 13-15).

The classical guitar produces a mellow and rich sound. This sound is often characterized as sweet and expressive, capable of producing a wide range of tonal qualities and dynamics. The guitar has an ability to produce a wide range of sounds through its two distinct characteristics by plucking the strings to create sharp, rhythmic tones, like a percussion instrument, and by playing multiple notes together to produce rich, ringing chords. The composer's approach is to write with these characteristics in mind (Cano 12). These characteristics have allowed performers to introduce new playing techniques for the classical guitar that extend beyond the conventional or traditional way of playing the instrument (Shephard 22). This extension of playing techniques in classical guitar performance results in the creation of unique sounds and effects. Extended techniques in classical guitar, therefore, refer to non-standard performance methods. In sheet music these non-standard methods might be defined by specific forms of notation or by descriptive instructions beyond what one might traditionally find on sheet music for the classical guitar. The relationship between the performer and their instrument is often one of collaboration rather than simply use. As Derek Bailey and Sven Smedberg describe in *Improvisation* (1975)

> "The instrument is not just a tool but an ally. It is not only a means to an end, but also a source of material, and technique for the improvisor is often an exploitation of the natural resources of the instrument. He might develop certain aspects of the instrument that appeal to him that seem particularly fruitful. The unorthodox technique is commonplace, its function being to serve only one man's purpose" (Derek 99)

Extended techniques on the classical guitar could be categorized based on timbral qualities, which relate to how the sound is perceived or felt, and tonal

production, which refers to how and where the sound is physically produced on the instrument. However, Lunn categorizes extended techniques based on the method or source of sound generation. Lunn's categories are as follows: "left-handed," "right-handed," "percussion," "with objects," "borrowed from other traditions," and "miscellaneous" (Lunn 5-73). I will use Lunn's categorization to analyze the extended techniques employed by Ranatunga, in relation to his experiences with the sonic and visual environment, as well as his embodied movements.

Left-Handed Extended Technique

This involves a variety of methods for producing sound on a classical guitar. The methods include the *glissando,* left-hand muting, *vibrato*, and bi-tones. In *glissando* the guitar player makes "a continuous or sliding movement from one note or specific pitch to another." There are two main types of the *glissando:* fret *glissandi,* where the player slides the left-hand finger up or down the string between notes, and bending *glissandi,* which allows the player to make seamless movement up a half or whole step (i.e., interval between notes) without the audible note changes associated with fret *glissandi* (Lunn 5). Left-hand muting over frets is accomplished by the player lightly touching the string in a rhythmic and systematic manner, producing a sound that is predominantly noise but still has a distinct pitch. (Lunn 13). Similarly, left-hand muting over the sound hole involves lightly pressing the strings near or over the sound hole to get a sound that's muted but still has a clear pitch (having a definable frequency) (Lunn 15). *Vibrato* on the classical guitar is produced in two ways: sliding your left-hand finger side to side, similar to a violinist pressing the string into the fret and slightly raising the pitch, or by bending the string across the fretboard, which tightens it and raises the pitch. Bi-tone could be described when hammering on a string, two sounds could be produced: one from the part of the string between your finger and the bridge, and another from the part behind your finger and the nut. That second sound is called the bi-tone.

Right-Handed Extended Technique

In right-handed extended techniques the guitar player's produces various sound effects with the right hand while the left hand contributes to other effects. Right-hand techniques include *glissando* (the right-handed version) *pizzicato,* plucking, *tremolo,* cross stroke, and nail scrape. The player achieves a *Right-hand glissando* by holding down a note with the left hand and sliding the right-hand fingernails from that point on the fingerboard toward the sound hole. The effect is more noticeable on the fourth, fifth, and sixth strings because their steel winding produces more noise compared to the smoother nylon first, second, and third strings. (Lunn 24). *Pizzicato* is a technique borrowed from other string instruments such as violin. In this, the player mutes the string near the bridge of the guitar with the flesh of the right hand. Bartók pizzicato, named after the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, requires the performer to lift the string above the fingerboard and let it snap back, causing it to slap against the fingerboard and produce a sharp attack.[3] In extended pizzicato the performer rests part of the right hand on the strings near the bridge. This allows the performer to control how much sound is muted as the left hand plays a series of notes (Lunn 25). "Plucking" techniques create different sounds based on where the performer plucks the strings. Plucking close to the bridge creates a sharp, bright sound with a thinner quality, while plucking over the sound hole results in a deeper tone. (Lunn 26). Right-hand tapping is when the performer presses down on a string at a specific fret with the right hand, producing a smooth, continuous sound without sharp attacks. (Lunn 29). Right-hand *tremolo* is played with the flesh of the thumb, producing a quiet, whispering sound with noticeable string noise from finger friction. This technique suits soft volume levels of play (Lunn 30). Cross stroke involves scraping the right-hand index fingernails along the length of the lower three strings, creating repetitive metallic sound (Vishnick 144). Although not classified by Lunn, this technique falls under right-hand techniques. Nail scrape is performed by dragging a right-hand fingernail along a lower string to produce

[3] "Attack" refers to the initial rise in volume of a sound, or the time it takes for a sound to go from silence to its peak volume.

noise (Vishnick 144). Performers shape their fingernails precisely to execute these techniques effectively and achieve the desired sound effects.

Percussive Sounds

Percussive sounds have become a prominent feature in guitar composition over the last decade, with composers utilizing the guitar as a percussive instrument. Lunn describes three types of percussively made sounds, namely string percussion, body percussion, and *tambora* effect. String percussion involves slapping the strings against the fretboard at various points to achieve random and fast percussive sounds. Body percussion refers to striking the wood of the guitar. A common body percussion technique called *golpe*, where the player/performer uses the right-hand finger, usually the ring finger, to tap the wood just below the bridge of the guitar. Composers such as Alberto Ginastera specifically instructed that the performer should "tap, on the box with the knuckles" (Lunn 41). The depth and type of sound needed can influence the approach to body percussion such as producing softer sounds with palm tapping and higher-pitched sounds with finger tapping. *Tambora* is a technique commonly used in 20th-century guitar music. It refers to "a two-headed drum of Latin America" (Rommen 328). On the guitar, the performer creates a *tambora* by striking near the bridge of the instrument with the fleshy part of the right-hand thumb or fingers, producing a sound like that of a timpani drum (Lunn 35).

Martin Vishnick has classified the palm slam as another percussive extended technique and described the technique palm slam as a short percussive effect produced by attacking the strings with palm downward onto the wood of the body of the guitar.

With Objects

Composers/performers of the 20th and 21st centuries have incorporated various objects to alter and produce unique sounds from the guitar. In David Bedford's composition *A Horse, His Name was Hungry Fencewaver Walkins* a teaspoon is

used to create a tremolo effect. This is done by bouncing a spoon on the string with the right hand while pressing the guitar string against a fret with the left hand (Lunn 44). Other ways of use of objects, a performer may also employ a slide, which is a metal or plastic cylinder that slips over any left-hand finger, to create glissandi (Lunn 46). The performer may insert a matchstick into the strings covering the fourth, fifth, and sixth strings to mute the lower strings and give the guitar a percussive sound, while playing the upper three strings normally. This creates the aural impression of two instruments playing simultaneously, one producing traditional guitar sounds and the other generating percussive effects (Lunn 47). The performer may also insert a folded newspaper under the strings to create a dry, rattling sound. This technique is like the matchstick method, but the newspaper's flexibility causes a distinct rattling effect (Lunn 49). Furthermore, the player may attach a clothespin to the sixth string about 2-3 cm from the bridge of the guitar and allow the clothespin to lean against the fifth string. When pulled back and released, the clothespin bounces on the fifth string for approximately three seconds, creating a sound reminiscent of a snare drum. In *Three Little Nightmares,* specifically in the movement *I Felt a Funeral in My Brain,* Brad Richter utilizes this percussive clothespin effect alongside open and fretted notes to evoke the sound of a funeral march (Lunn 50).

Borrowed from Other Traditions

Another category of extended techniques is those borrowed from other traditions such as Flamenco, Latin American and Asian. These include the *Rasgueado* and the *Scordatura*. The Rasgueado, is a style of guitar playing in which the player strums the strings in an outward movement (flick) of fingers (a, m, i in this order) and in a repetitive pattern. This technique is commonly found in Flamenco and Latin style guitar playing. Rasgueado is good for increasing the volume of the guitar sound. There are a variety of ways to perform a rasgueado. One way is to fan (spread the right-hand fingers out and move them quickly across the strings of the guitar), creating quick, successive attacks. This technique generally starts with the pinky finger, followed by the ring finger (a), the middle

finger (m), and ends with the index finger (i). The player may also employ the thumb (p) can in different combinations. Another way to perform a rasgueado is to strum quickly with one right hand finger moving it up and down across the strings. *Scordatura* is a common guitar performance technique It involves giving the guitar an alternative tuning, i.e., tuning it differently than the standard tuning (EADGBE) the first E being the lowest of the six strings. The most common alternate tuning is referred to as "drop D" tuning.[4] Recently composers like Italian guitarist/composer Carlo Domeniconi (1947-present), American folk music composer Robert Beaser (1954-present) have used scordatura to evoke sounds from different cultures.

Miscellaneous

There are also miscellaneous extended guitar techniques that do not fall under the above categories. There is a strumming technique in which the performer strums the strings between the nut and the tuning pegs with either the left or right hand. This player may perform this in combination with other techniques. In 4th movement of *Serenades of the Unicorn,* by Einojuhani Rautavaara, the right hand plays a rasgueado while the left hand executes this strumming technique on the six strings, creating accents in the music with its motions (Lunn 66). Rapid mute is another technique that involves lightly resting the left-hand fingers on the strings without pressing them to the fretboard while plucking the strings with the right hand. This creates a muted sound. (Vishnick 144). Snare drum yet another miscellaneous technique refers to crossing the strings on one another and striking them in a standard manner. This technique involves three phases: preparation (getting the hand ready to strike the strings), glissando resonance (making a sliding sound as the hand moves across the strings) and release (letting the hand come off the strings to finish the sound making. Additional miscellaneous techniques like hand-brushing and rubbing involves moving the hand across or along the strings to produce a noise.

[4] In Drop-D tuning the sixth string is tuned from the pitch E, down to a D. This is often used in pieces that are in the key of D major because it allows the tonic to be the lowest sounding note, and the open fifth string A, is the dominant.

Extended guitar techniques may also involve natural and artificial harmonics. Natural harmonics are specific spots on the instrument where, when lightly touched, the string vibrates in a way that produces a ringing, chime or bell-like tone that is melodic or brighter than the fundamental note. The player may create this sound by using one hand, usually the left-hand playing finger, to touch specific spots or fret positions on the string while the right hand plucks the string.[5] Unlike natural harmonics, artificial harmonics are not limited to certain spots or fret positions of the string. The player may produce an artificial harmonic any place on the guitar string. Typically, the artificial harmonics are produced by plucking the string with the ring finger or thumb while lightly touching the same string with the right-hand index finger twelve frets higher than the note being played with the left hand.[6]

Extended guitar techniques are not limited to what I have described above. By going beyond the established conventions or traditions of playing the classical guitar, the composers and performers who employ these innovative extended techniques can expand the boundaries of classical guitar performance. As a result, extended techniques have become an essential aspect of contemporary classical music in general and contemporary classical guitar music in particular. There are many possibilities for creating new techniques that produce a wide range of sounds. Composers and performers have utilized and continue to utilize the above-described longer established and newer innovative extended techniques for various reasons, such as interpreting moods, creating feeling, and recreating the sounds in their environment. Extended techniques in classical guitar are

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[5] The spot on the string for a natural harmonic may be over the fifth, seventh, and twelfth fret or over the third, fourth, and ninth fret.

[6] Additional harmonic types include high and sound hole harmonics, half- harmonics, harmonic tambora and multiphonic harmonics (Vishnick 144). High and sound hole harmonics that are located between the third fret and the nut at the headstock, as well as between the end of the fretboard and the bridge. Half-Harmonic semi-dampened harmonic, created by placing the finger imprecisely for a natural harmonic, which filters the sound. Harmonic Tambora technique involves striking the strings with an extended right-hand finger (typically the index or thumb) at a natural harmonic node point to produce resonance. Multiphonic Harmonic one finger lightly touches the string directly over a node point while the other hand attacks the string to create resonance (Vishnick 144).

constantly evolving, as there are no fixed rules limiting them. This allows artists the freedom to develop their own unique techniques using their hands, objects, or other creative approaches to produce different sounds. Amaranath Ranatunga has embraced this artistic freedom as a classical guitarist. He initially followed techniques used by famous performers in their compositions but subsequently, he has developed his unique ways of producing the sounds that he desires from the classical guitar for his original work.

CHAPTER III

MUSIC, ENVIRONMENT AND EVERYDAY LIFE

All people interact with their daily surroundings, and the sensory experiences of this interaction significantly impact their everyday life. Environmental psychology and soundscape ecology fields study the relationship between audio, visual, and human perception of the environment. In soundscape ecology, urban soundscapes include anthropogenic sounds (sounds produced by human activity) such as air and ground traffic including voices, and vehicle sounds, and natural soundscapes include sounds like birdsong, breeze, and animal calls. Landscapes, on the other hand, include visual elements such as vehicles, buildings, and green spaces. Studies have found that the audio/sonic environment contributes 24% and the visual environment 76% to an individual's overall satisfaction with the urban settings of their living environment (Jin Yong 2020).

The interplay between sonic and visual experience of the environment impacts the way we express through art. The connection between art and the environment inspires artists to create works that deeply reflect their aesthetic expression. Some artists create works that represent nature such as "The Four Seasons" by Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) and "Symphony No. 6 (Pastoral)" by German composer Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), while others such as composer and sound ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp (1946-present) to create art directly in natural settings. These artistic creations induce strong emotions and inspire audiences to think about their relationship with the environment (Reid, Reeve and Cutis).

Soundscape - Sonic Environment

People are deeply connected to the environment, often considering their acoustic surroundings when designing homes, schools, religious buildings, and businesses. In most cases, they prefer calm and peaceful sounds over loud and disruptive noise. The term "soundscape" was introduced by R. Murray Schafer

in 1977 in reference to the acoustic environment that surrounds us. He conceptualizes soundscapes as musical compositions, radio programs, or acoustic environments. Schafer started to explore the soundscape of the changing world with the impact of current human activities in relation to noise pollution, i.e. to evaluate noise and its effect on quality of life (Schafer 3).

Soundscape impacts the standard of living, work and recreation conditions such as leisure activities, relaxation or entertainment. Research on soundscapes has shifted focus from primarily human and social sciences such as psychology, sociology, architecture, anthropology, and medicine to include a broader, global perspective that examines how sound is experienced across different countries and cultures (Brooks 30). This broader approach emphasizes the importance of understanding how diverse individuals perceive and interpret sounds, recognizing sounds as significant events that can influence their emotional and cognitive responses.

To fully understand the perceiving of soundscape and capture a complete soundscape of an environment requires extraordinary skills and patience since soundscape consists of events heard not objects seen (Schafer 8). Schafer suggests the first task in understanding and analyzing a soundscape is to identify significant features of the environment. As an example, in a train station clattering of train wheels on tracks, announcements over loudspeakers, occasional whistle of approaching trains, near a sea shore, crashing waves, cries of seagulls, and in religious temples or churches, echoes of hymns or chanting, ringing bells and those highlight as they are unique to distinguish from other environments, frequent as they occur regularly and consistently within environment or dominant to stand out from other sounds within an environment.

It is crucial to identify and categorize the sounds we perceive for analysis of the sonic environment. Sound consists of vibrations or waves within a specific frequency range, but not all vibrations are classified as sound. Schafer categorizes sound into keynote sounds, signals and sound marks. Keynote is the main key or the main sound. Keynote sounds in an environment are background sounds that

people may not consciously notice, but influential on experience and habits. In a natural environment, keynote sounds could be the sound of water, wind, forests, plains, birds, insects and animals. These keynote sounds have a profound impact on how people are about and connect with their environment. Signals are sounds produced on purpose to gain attention or deliver a message to people such as bells, whistles, horns and sirens. The sound mark is a similar concept as a landmark in that it refers to the unique and important sound that makes a place or environment recognizable. Schafer's ideas are valuable in studying the sounds around people. His work encourages us to think more about how sound affects human lives and how we can reduce noise pollution and enjoy important sounds.

Reybroucks is another scholar who categorized sound into noise and music based on the types of vibrations they produce. He considered examples of music-based sound as the vibrations coming from musical instruments tuned to a frequency of musical notes, and human voices producing harmonic vibrations, both of which are pleasant. Noise based sounds are a product of irregular vibration and that causes stress, fatigue and unpleasant emotions. Not all music-based sounds are perceived as pleasant, nor are all noise-based sounds considered unpleasant. The perception of a sound as pleasant or unpleasant often depends on personal preference. For example, sounds like flowing water or rain, which are technically considered noise, are frequently described as pleasant because many people find these sounds calming and relaxing. Also, music work by composers like Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and Béla Bartók (1881–1945) considered noise when they introduce dissonant harmonies[7], irregular rhythms and non-traditional scales. Therefore, categorizing sound as noise or music depends on personal, cultural or historical context (Reybrouck 2014).

Numerous studies have centered around soundscape research, exploring how people perceive the natural sounds they hear and how these sounds connect to their lives. Steven Feld, a researcher influenced by Schafer's soundscape concept, sought innovative ways to understand the world through acoustic ecology and

[7] A combination of musical notes that sound harsh or unstable (Parncutt 2011)

sound studies. His work with the Kaluli people in Papua New Guinea focused on how sound, music, and nature are interconnected. Feld explored the importance of sound in Kaluli culture, especially in their musical practices, like funerals and ceremonies. These practices are linked to their beliefs about rainforest birds, which they see as spiritual beings. Feld realized that the music of nature is closely related to human language and music. He observed that everyday sounds heard by this forest living Kaluli people mark different times like, the time of day, seasons, plant life cycles, and bird migrations. Sounds give meaning to spaces, connecting people to their environment. Feld developed the idea of acoustemology, or knowing the world through sound. His work emphasizes how our senses create a sense of place, and how those places shape our experiences (Feld 151).

Other than natural sounds, anthropogenic sounds in urban settings, places like streets, public transport, and buildings create unique soundscapes. Whether we notice it or not, we are constantly surrounded by sound. Early researchers like Schwarz described recording sounds of urban environments as "sound ethnographies," while Demers, another researcher, referred to them as "cosmopolitan soundscapes." Academics such as Bennett and DeNora describe sound experiences as the "soundtracks of our lives." Whether we realize it or not, we are part of this sound experience when we enter a natural space (David 706).

The sounds surrounding us whether natural or man-made serve as the setting for musical expression. From the hum of city streets to the quiet rustle of leaves, these everyday sounds can inspire melodies, rhythms, and harmonies, shaping the emotional and aesthetic qualities of the music. In one of the more contemporary definitions of music, the American composer and music theorist John Cage declares a connection between our sonic environment and music that “Music is sounds, sounds around us whether we are in or out of concert halls”. Cage’s reference is to Henry Thoreau’s book Walden in which the author experiences and is entertained by the sounds of nature (Schafer 5).

Since the mid-20th century, musical creations changed with the shift between note-based music and sound-based music. Modern genres blend elements of sound-based music along with note-based music. Leigh Landy says "sound-based music typically designates the art form in which the sound, that is, not the musical note, is its basic unit". Leigh identifies sound based music as music based on sounds that are not musical notes. Trevor Wishart refers to note-based music following a structured and established system in the traditional Western model (Wishart 11). Therefore, music based on sound originates from sounds heard every day such as rain, water flow, bird singings, vehicle sounds etc. and may not belong to standard Western notes.

Analysis of music allows researchers to explore the ways in which people use sounds to communicate, express identity, or create meaning. This process reveals the relationship between sound, culture, and society, and how soundscapes shape individual and collective experiences.

Through analysis of music and performances, the complex interactions between music and the environment become clearer, highlighting music's role in shaping our understanding of the world around us. Artists could actively listen and immerse themselves in the various sounds of the environment, with the intent of later recreating them in an artistic work. Replicating the sounds of the natural world could be among the earliest forms of music.

> "Go to outside environments (urban, rural, hostile, benign) and record by any means (memory, written notations, tape recordings) the sound situations of those environments.
>
> Returning to an inside performance space at any later time, re-create, solely by means of your voices and instruments" (Lucier 17).

Artists and musicians such as Claude Debussy (1862–1918) a composer, David Dunn (1953-Present) a composer, performer and theorist have incorporated environmental sounds into their work. Field recording, for instance, is a technique used by many contemporary composers and sound artists to capture the sonic

characteristics of specific locations. These recordings are then manipulated and integrated into musical/ ambient compositions often paired with visual elements, creating pieces that reflect and engage with the natural and built environments (Madison 2022).

More recent studies on the sonic environment focus on the actual experience of music and how it is played, heard, and felt. An English musician, Brian Eno, is renowned for pioneering ambient music. His solo album, "Music for Airports," embodies a sense of risk and awareness of danger, reflecting specific moods for the listener. Eno argues that reflecting moods beyond background music, which is a recording of the sounds of a particular environment, allows listeners to experience music in their own unique way (Maddison 2022).

Classical guitar is an instrument which has the capability of producing note-based music through strings and sound-based music through fan strutted sound board and fretboard. Classical guitar performers are able to produce sound-based music in their compositions incorporating extended techniques which is an unconventional approach of producing sound structured around standard notes. In chapter three we are analyzing how sonic experience shaped innovative extended techniques which produced sound-based music used in classical guitar performance.

Landscape - Visual Environment

People naturally experience their everyday life using multiple senses at the same time. Human brain combines information from all these senses such as sight, sound, touch, smell and taste to understand and interpret surroundings. Audio experience in an environment captures only a portion of details while visual experience can capture a whole scene in a photograph or a video highlights key details in an environment. And the majority of people could read a map and or understand basic visual diagrams like architects' drawings. However, understanding complex charts used by phoneticians, acousticians, or musicians requires specialized knowledge. Sounds extracted from urban and natural environments collect limited information of an environment but visual scenes aid

in complete understanding and information. Research shows that sight and sound are closely connected and influence each other than working separately (Stéphanie 494). Since the introduction of the soundscape concept, research explored the audio-visual interactions particularly in urban planning and noise control in the surrounding environment (Li and Lau).

Soundscape perception is a personal experience of how a person experiences auditory senses and does not have widely accepted standards or clear ways to describe. Visual perception is the interpretation of visual senses to understand the world around us. Visuals play a key role in perceiving and distinguishing soundscapes and physical characteristics of an environment can vary significantly across different locations. (Liu 30). This highlights the need for frequent evaluation of the connection between specific landscape features and soundscape perception to better understand their relationship and impact on our everyday life. Focusing too much on what we see can limit other ways we experience landscapes, especially through sound and music. We navigate our surroundings through sound and visuals, the way we engage with music and performances demonstrates how our understanding of art is deeply connected to our sensory experiences.

Apart from urban spaces, the natural environment is a source of artistic inspiration. Landscape plays a powerful role in the lives of many artists whose experiences with nature shape their work and influence their identity as creators (Amy Lynn 1). As a result, the environment and surroundings impact an artist’s ability to think creatively without restrictions, allowing them to experiment new ideas and concepts to create innovative and unique work. Many artists are concerned about their surroundings and dedicate physical space, like a studio, quiet environment and live closer or natural environments to fully immerse themselves in their creative process and materialize their creative ideas. The artists’ surrounding, whether natural landscapes, urban settings significantly impact their artist style to provide inspiration and unique perspectives. The close relation between artists' work to their environmental experiences has a direct impact on the type and nature of their artistic work.

Visual and Auditory Performance

Auditory performance through music has traditionally been regarded as an acoustic phenomenon, primarily experienced through hearing. For a long time, most music recordings were distributed via audio-only formats, such as vinyl records, cassettes, CDs, and MP3 files. As a result, music analysis has largely focused on audio signals, capturing information from the acoustic presentation of music (Zhiyao 63). Historically, music performance was a combined audio-visual experience, but the introduction of technologies like the radio and gramophone separated the visual and aural aspects of music. This division influenced how music is perceived, often minimizing or ignoring the visual contributions to performances (Willam Forde 203). However, later with the introduction technological innovations such as films, television and smart phones minimized the gap between audio-visual experiences.

Recent day music performances involve sound and visual elements that enhance the overall experience. In album covers, live performance video, and music video help musicians express their ideas and emotions to create a richer experience for the audience or the listener. The impact of visuals in understanding and interpreting music is significant, as a musician's gestures, movements, and facial expressions offer a deeper understanding and emotional connection when interacting with audio elements. Orchestral performances are another example of how visuals impact the musical experience. In symphony concerts, musicians must coordinate their movements closely. For expert audiences, watching how the musicians interact and perform together adds to the emotional impact of the music (Zhiyao 63).

Additionally, visual cues help define the performer's persona and attitude, creating an interpersonal connection with the audience. The visual aspects of a performance such as facial expressions, hand gestures, and body movements allow performers to engage directly with the audience, making the experience feel like a shared, reciprocal interaction. Without these visual elements, the performance may feel more like a solitary act, where the audience is merely a

passive observer. The visual aspects personalize the performance, drawing the audience closer to the musicians and enhancing the sense of collective experience (Willam Forde 204).

In addition to audiences at music performances, others also benefit from analyzing music through both audio and video, rather than just audio alone. For example, in educational settings, students learning an instrument gain valuable insights by watching professional musicians perform, as the visual aspect helps them understand technical details like fingering or string choice. When large ensembles are broadcasted with multiple camera angles, it's important for producers to know which musicians are visible in each camera view at any given moment. To do this, video information needs to be synchronized with the audio recording. As a result, there has been growing interest in visually analyzing musical performances, an area that was largely ignored in the past. (Zhiyao 64).

In Chapter Four, I will analyze YouTube music video archives of Amaranath Ranatunga's classical guitar performances to explore the connection between his sonic-visual experience and his use of innovative extended techniques. Soundscape theories and landscape perceptions of the environment provide a foundation for understanding this relationship, offering deeper insights into Ranatunga's artistic inspiration.

CHAPTER IV

MUSICAL JOURNEY OF MR. AMARANATH RANATUNGA

Amaranath Ranatunga, the musician on whom I focus this chapter, is a Sri Lankan guitarist who is nationally renowned for his innovative use of extended techniques in his compositions. The extended techniques that he uses allow him to create unique sounds and textures that redefine the boundaries of guitar music. Ranatunga creates a distinct sonic signature through his experimentation with extended techniques, that captivates listeners and challenges traditional notions of guitar music. His pioneering approach to extended techniques not only pushes the boundaries of what is possible on the instrument but also inspires a new generation of musicians to explore the limitless possibilities of sound.

Amaranath Ranatunga's love for music started at the age of eight, when he heard a classical guitar music piece from a cassette given to him by a friend. He recalled this childhood experience to a local newspaper, saying "After listening to the music piece on the cassette I realized the beauty of music that the guitar could create." (Fernando). Ranatunga added that during the 1960s, when the guitar was not a widely popular instrument, he was fortunate to have the opportunity to study its sound from an early age. Ranatunga's parents envisioned a future for him as a doctor, engineer, or at least a businessman. However, his passion for music led him down a different path. Without his parents' support, he set off on his own journey to become a classical guitarist. Ranatunga was self-motivated and dedicated his full time to learning how to play classical guitar. In 1964 when he was young, he discovered an opportunity to learn from an American national conducting guitar class in Mount Lavinia, Sri Lanka. There, he was able to associate with the American guitarist Mervin Sanders, who profoundly influenced Ranatunga's journey and shaped his interest in the kind of captivating sound that he now embraces as a composer and performer. Later he followed examinations related to classical guitar performance conducted by Royal School of Music-London as an addition to his professional qualifications (Fernando).

He did not stop at exploring only classical guitar techniques and sound, He also looked into related traditions, such as flamenco music. He saw that learning flamenco guitar was important for becoming a more versatile guitarist. He identified the difference of classical guitar music, which is more melodious, meaningful, soft compared to flamenco music which is rougher. Later in 1977, young Ranatunga got the valuable opportunity to learn flamenco guitar under the Mexican flamenco guitarist Fredric Bruno. Fredric Bruno visited Sri Lanka to compose a symphony titled "Sea symphony" for the guitar. Ranatunga was fortunate to receive Bruno's guidance over one and half years and was able to polish his performance (Fernando)

Sri Lanka is a country that has mainly evolved from folk traditions tied to Buddhist rituals and daily life, later blending with South and North Indian musical forms. Influences from Western styles introduced during Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonization shaped its diverse and unique sound (Peiris 3). Until the early 21st century, music education in Sri Lanka was mainly shaped by these traditional musical forms; however, classical and flamenco music weren't included in undergraduate and graduate education. Ranatunga is a key figure in Sri Lanka's Classical and flamenco guitar scene who has made an immense contribution to music education. In 2007, Ranatunga was recruited by the University of the Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo to serve as Sri Lanka's first lecturer in classical and flamenco guitar. As a lecturer, he got the opportunity to design the syllabus for the four-year Bachelor of Performing Arts (BA) degree course (Fernando). He pioneered and supported the development of Classical guitar music as well as academic structure for Classical and Flamenco Guitar studies in Sri Lanka. Ranatunga's impact on the guitar community extends far beyond the classroom. As the guitar gained popularity, it was added to the curriculum of government schools, a move that effectively spread guitar appreciation and practice across the country, particularly in rural areas. His educational legacy has been to motivate and build a new generation of guitarists. He guided students to complete examinations related to classical guitar performance conducted by Royal School of Music-London- for guitar. His approach further expanded the standard of guitar education in Sri Lanka.

Ranatunga, on his mission to showcase the beauty of classical and flamenco guitar music, organized a series of concerts in the early 2000's featuring his solo live performances and those of his students. The performance series evolved into a nationwide tour, featuring concerts scheduled across the country and meant to spread classical guitar music and his guitar style("Amaranath") with the use of technique. He also documented his passion as a performer through over 200 video archives on YouTube, and three CDs with his compositions and two albums: "Another Jourey" and "The Impact" published in streaming platforms. A book titled "Wadakayu Bihiwima" (Birth of a musician) which is his second book reflects his deep understanding of classical guitar performance and the importance of becoming an instrumentalist, especially in the classical guitar. His efforts continued to inspire a new generation of classical guitarists, both in Sri Lanka and beyond.

Ranatunga's collaborative group lessons and workshops, featuring renowned musicians such as Dr. Paul Cesarczyk (American classical guitarist) provided his students with valuable exposure to diverse artistic approaches and deepened their appreciation for the classical guitar. In collaboration with the Guitar Association of Sri Lanka, Ranatunga played an important role in establishing an international platform dedicated to the promotion of Asian guitar music ("Love"). His contributions have shaped the development of guitar music, and his efforts continue to inspire musicians across the globe. Ranatunga has performed not only in Sri Lanka as he has gotten the opportunity to perform worldwide. He has performed live at Glenroy Library in Victoria, Australia in 2019, 2023, and 2025, and at Broadmeadows Library in 2023 and 2024. In 2023, he also gave a live concert with Australian classical guitarist Bernardo Soler at St. John's Anglican Church in Cranbourne. Additionally, he performed in a global live concert via Zoom and gave a solo performance at Nectar Garden, Loews Resorts, in Coronado, California, in 2019 (Ranatunga website). Amaranath Rantunga represented Sri Lanka at the Banglore International Guitar Festival held on 15th December 2015 in Banglore, India. His performance was highly appreciated by an international audience, sharing his unique playing style and musical expression. In addition, his repertoire also speaks in different locations as he has

videos performing in Las Vegas, San Diego in USA as well as major cities in Australia. I will discuss Ranatunga's artistic inspiration and his connection to the environment in greater detail later in this chapter.

Ranatunga is not only a guitarist and composer but also a visionary who follows his own philosophy of moving beyond the limitations of written music. He continually explores the sonic possibilities of the classical guitar. Ranatunga acknowledges the influence of flamenco traditions in shaping his guitar techniques which highlight his effort to bring new expression and approaches to classical music (Ranatunga 219). He expresses a desire to establish a distinctive approach to guitar performance and emphasizes the importance of experimentation to develop a new musical genre through his compositions and publications.

Ranatunga and his Philosophy

"I am sure with this new younger generation, Sri Lankans will have the opportunity to hear a different style of music, a much melodious sound from guitar" – Amaranath Ranatunga

Amaranath Ranatunga has documented his musical journey across various platforms, including interviews with local media channels, newspaper articles, and a feature on the YouTube channel Jere B The EntreMusician. He has also shared his work through videos of his original compositions, two published books, a research article, and his personal website, offering a comprehensive view of his evolving artistic vision.

At the beginning of his musical journey, Ranatunga studied and performed well-known classical guitar pieces such as "Recuerdos de la Alhambra" and "Lágrima", presenting them at various venues including concert halls and workshops. He admired and followed the compositions of guitarists like Fernando Sor, Mauro Guiliani, and later, Francesco Tárrega and Andrés Segovia, who contributed to the development of the guitar and the technique of guitar performance. He studied and practiced the standard classical guitar techniques

established by these composers such as proper finger placement, tone production, phrasing, and right-hand techniques like tremolo and arpeggios. Ranatunga drew inspiration from Tárrega and Segovia's efforts to highlight the classical guitar's versatility and refine its performance posture. This influenced him to study the instrument in depth and experiment with extended techniques to broaden its expressive potential. Through this journey, he developed a comprehensive understanding of musical elements and came to see the guitar as a profoundly expressive and adaptable instrument that capable of evoking orchestral textures, a perspective reflected in his agreement with Beethoven's famous statement describing the guitar as a "miniature orchestra" (Fernando).

In his interview with Jere B., Ranatunga shares his philosophy as a classical guitar composer and performer, stating that his artistic vision is to create meaningful art for the people. He emphasizes that his goal is to convey messages to society through his music. In his composition "Land of Green," Ranatunga reflects on Sri Lanka's economic challenges, using the concept of "green" as a symbol of prosperity. He shows Sri Lanka as a land of prosperity, highlighting that its rich natural resources provide the strength and resilience needed to overcome difficult times. Ranatunga's unique approach lies in his ability to connect social themes with the natural environment, highlighting his deep-rooted connection to nature through his compositions. In the same interview, Ranatunga also reflects on the rapid evolution of music today. He notes that while the development of classical guitar music historically took centuries, contemporary musical trends now shift within just a few months. He emphasizes that to succeed as a performer and composer in this fast-paced landscape, one must offer something unique and innovative. Guided by this belief, Ranatunga imagines himself as an extraordinary composer, committed to keeping pace with the evolving nature of contemporary music.

Ranatunga's research investigates the reduced popularity of classical and flamenco guitar music among younger audiences due to complexity to play and understand with the use of advanced performance techniques, and mellow and soft sound which some may find less exciting compared to more energetic styles

such as Rock, Heavy Metal and Pop music. He tests the preference of the young generation over mellow classical music, rougher Flamenco music and his three original compositions "The 3rd Movement," "Your Way," and "Beyond the Triangle" which includes his innovative extended techniques. He concludes that combining Classical and Flamenco Guitar techniques with innovative extended techniques attracts young people to the Guitar. Composers and players are, therefore, in an ongoing process of including extended techniques to improve their instruments and compositions. As I explore his extensive archives, I've noticed that a significant portion of his videos are centered around nature and the environment to convey a message to society.

Ranatunga's published book titled "New Wave for a Musician," in which he outlines key steps to becoming a successful musician. He emphasizes the importance of pushing musical boundaries by developing unique playing and composing styles to keep pace with the evolving nature of contemporary music. He further states that creating a unique path in music is not easy, it involves taking risks, facing challenges, and experiencing failures. However, he believes it is worthwhile to explore your own path rather than simply imitating established artists, as this journey leads to discovering your true artistic abilities. Ranatunga's philosophy emphasizes the importance of understanding one's strengths, recognizing opportunities, and shaping a vision that goes beyond conventional boundaries. I believe it is this commitment to building his own artistic identity that led him to explore new sound possibilities on the guitar and continues to drive his ongoing music journey ("New Wave" 47-56)

Ranatunga and his Use of Extended Technique

He has documented his unique techniques in his research article "Extending the Boundaries of Classical and Flamenco Guitar with Compositions' The 3rd Movement, 'Your Way' and Beyond the Triangle". He listed the main techniques that he uses in his compositions. We can categorize them as Left-handed Techniques, Right-handed Techniques, Percussive, and Techniques borrowed from other traditions according to Lunn's categorization of extended

techniques. Some of his extended techniques fall into multiple categories, as he often combines two or more methods simultaneously to create a layered sound effect.

Ranatunga's use of Left-hand techniques create percussive notes that blend rhythm and melody and are essential to the expressiveness and dynamics of his compositions. He uses traditional techniques, such as tapping on the fretboard using the left-hand ring finger and pinky finger. Later in the composition, he expands this technique by using all four fingers (excluding the thumb) to produce a more intense tapping effect. This innovative adaptation of a traditional method transforms it into an extended technique unique to his playing style. Other techniques that he uses is "hammer on" technique from left hand which is played by plucking a note and then press a second finger onto the same string to produce a new note without plucking again (Lunn 3) and the opposite of this technique which is known as pull-off when after you do a hammer-on with another finger, pull that finger off the string with a slight flick so the next note rings out. He often uses these traditional techniques without plucking the strings with his right hand. Instead, he presses or pulls the string with his left hand to produce notes. This allows him to keep his right hand free to perform extended techniques like tapping, as shown in his demonstration video (Ranatunga, Guitar demonstration). Ranatunga also employs left hand muting technique, where he places his fingers lightly without fully pressing down. This technique results in a percussive, dampened effect that contributes to rhythmic complexity, often complementing right-hand techniques to form intricate textures. He also uses slide (glissando) and harmonics on certain frets to compliment right-hand extended techniques

Ranatunga uses many variations of Right-hand techniques. As left hand is used mostly to fret notes, he uses his right hand to follow variations and new playing rhythms which contribute to the creation of the innovative extended techniques described below. He uses new finger movements beyond the traditional playing styles. One of such finger movements that Ranatunga uses is the brush stroke technique on the guitar, which he does by sweeping all four fingers of his right hand across the strings near the 15th fret. This creates a smooth,

flowing sound, with the fingers lightly grazing the strings rather than plucking them individually. He performs a tremolo, as explained in Chapter One, but adds a variation by switching from strings to tapping the guitar's soundboard to create the tremolo effect. Meanwhile, he plays the bass notes with his thumb (p), just like in a traditional tremolo.

Percussive elements form a crucial part of Ranatunga's extended techniques. These techniques evolve striking different parts of the guitar to create a variety of sounds. A key innovation that Ranatunga makes to this technique is tapping on the soundboard, which is tuned (B Flat or F for classical guitar, and E for flamenco guitars) based on the thickness of the soundboard and fan strutting (explained in Chapter one) adding an extra rhythmic dimension beyond the six strings of the guitar. (Ranatunga 219) In his demonstrational YouTube video on tapping techniques he demonstrates *Single Tap* which like tamboura effect created by lightly striking near the bridge with the right hand, to add a strong percussive bass sound. He expands the *single tap into heavy double tap* technique, with right hand thumb (p) and all four fingers simultaneously strike the fretboard, creating a powerful, drum like effect. He uses mute sound effect from right hand palm covering the 12th fret or 15th fret while striking the strings, producing a muted, percussive sound. He uses thump (p) strikes the edge of the soundboard and strings as another percussive technique. Fast percussive tapping on the top board is another key percussive technique that Ranatunga uses. He achieves this by alternatively tapping between the left and right side of the guitar top board using the thumb and all other right fingers. This technique keeps the tempo fast and maintains spacing between taps. He introduces a new dimension to percussive techniques by using both hands to tap simultaneously on the fretboard and strings. This coordinated action between the right and left hands is known as the "Rapid Double-Handed" technique where he taps the soundboard with the right hand and fretboard with the left hand to generate a steady rhythm to create a percussive effect.

Ranatunga has studied and appreciates Flamenco guitar music (Ranatunga 216). He mentions his idea is to merge these Flamenco and classical music

traditions to create a hybrid approach. From flamenco guitar traditions he incorporates *rasgueados,* a rapid strumming technique that intensifies rhythm. He created his own way of playing this technique. He uses three-stroke Rasgueado by tapping thumb and flicking the thumb finger inwards (towards performer) and plucking strings with an inward movement using (i) finger (Ranatunga 217). This technique is unique to Ranatunga as he combines traditional rasgueado patterns with a percussive element. Using the top board of the guitar as a secondary sound source. Ranatunga plays another variation of rasgueado where he executes a backward rasgueado by flicking the strings in reverse while simultaneously tapping the edge of the sound hole with the thumb(p). Golpe is a technique that he uses, and which involves tapping the top board with the ring finger (a) and using the thump(p) to tap the top board of the guitar to vary the golpe technique.

Ranatunga uses this technique in his work with variation along with melody or with other extended techniques to create the mood of the performance. Ranatunga's innovative extended techniques reflect his goal of creating a unique performance style, showcasing his artistic originality.

Amaranath Ranatunga's Composition Analysis

In alignment with his philosophy of creating unique techniques in classical guitar performance, Ranatunga has consistently combined natural elements and environments into his artistic work. He does not explicitly describe himself as an environmental philosopher, his artistic practice demonstrates a strong alignment with environmental aesthetics which centers on human sensory perception, imagination, and emotional response to environments, treating these as essential components of aesthetic value (Brady and Prior 256). Unlike traditional aesthetics, which often prioritized the fine arts, environmental aesthetics has expanded to include natural and modified environments, as well as everyday sensory experiences.

According to his video archives on YouTube, many of his performances are set in natural landscapes or visually reference nature, reflecting his intention to convey messages through environmental themes. I observed a clear connection between his environmental experience and his use of extended techniques in his composition and performance. Over the years 2009-2025 he has mainly travelled and performed in natural and urban settings Australia, United States and Sri Lanka. His compositions have titled according to the experience of the place of performance such as *Las Vegas in Harmony, Flamenco in San Diego and Sigiriya-Brushstroke with six strings* (Sigiriya – a world heritage site in Sri Lanka (Commodified 224)) or relating to a message he is trying to convey for an example; prosperity of Sri Lanka as *Land of green,* think beyond the conventional by *Beyond the Triangle and* depth and reality of the life in *Deep and reality.* The table below outlines the years, locations, and visual focus of these works, highlighting his approach to connecting artistic ideas with his environment experience. From this list, I have selected three compositions *Earth, Wind, Water and Fire, Beyond the Triangle,* and *Echo in the Forest* to explore how his ability to recreate natural sounds and craft immersive soundscapes and how his experiences with environment inspire his artistic vision, for his goal of producing unique sounds through innovative extended techniques in classical guitar performance.

Table 1: Repertoire of Amaranath Ranatunga and associated locations

Title of work	Year	Location	Visual focus
Black & White	2025	Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Urban Landscape
Blooming Summertime	2024	Vic, Australia	Cranboune, Royal Botanic Garden
Fiesta	2024	Docklands, Vic. Australia	Urban Landscape
The Time Effect	2023	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Studio
Another Journey	2023	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Nature Resort
Time is Limited	2022	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Nature landscape
Land of Green	2022	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Natural landscape
"Sigiriya" -Brushstroke with Six Strings	2020	Sigiriya, Dambulla, Sri Lanka	World Heritage/ Studio
2019, Relief of the Solitude	2020	Arizona, USA	Grand Canyon/ Studio
Deep	2020	Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Natural and Urban
Earth, Wind, Water & Fire	2019	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape/ Studio
Las Vegas in Harmony	2019	Las Vegas, Nevada, USA	Urban Landscape
A City in the Night	2019	Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Urban Landscape

Table 1 Continued

Title of work	Year	Location	Visual focus
Flamenco in San Diego	2019	San Diego, CA, USA	Urban Landscape
The Impact	2019	Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Urban Landscape
Before the Sunset	2018	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Beyond the Triangle	2018	Alfred Nicholes Park, Dandenong, Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Natural Landscape
The 3rd Movement	2018	Alexander Park, Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Urban Landscape
Reunion	2018	Alfred Nicholes Park, Dandenong, Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Natural Landscape
The Change	2018	Melbourne, Vic. Australia	Urban Landscape
Alegrias	2018	Rumaswala, Galle, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Harmony Forever	2018	UVPA, Colombo, Sri Lanka	Indoor Space
Don't Walk, Run	2018	Rumaswala, Galle, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape

Table 1 Continued

Title of work	Year	Location	Visual focus
Deep and Reality	2017	Rumaswala, Galle, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Farruca	2017	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Studio
Your Way	2017	Russian Center, Indenpendant Avc. Colombo, Sri Lanka	Indoor Space
Romantic Poem of King Kasyapa	2017	Sigiriya, Dambulla, Sri Lanka	World Heritage/ Studio
Malaguena	2017	Galle (Fort), Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Bulerias -2	2017	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Yesterday is Gone	2017	Gampaha, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Change your mood	2016	Waga, Seethawaka, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Last part of the night	2016	Waga, Seethawaka, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Echo in a forest	2016	Waga, Seethawaka, Sri Lanka	Natural Landscape
Sri Lankan medley	2009	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Studio

Reunion by Amaranath Ranatunga
Deep and Reality by Amaranath Ranatunga
Fiesta - Amaranath Ranatunga
"FIESTA" - AMARANATH RANATUNGA
Las Vegas in Harmony - Amaranath Ranatunga
Las Vegas in Harmony - Amaranath Ranatunga

Figure 4: Snapshots from performance videos by Amaranath Ranatunga: Reunion, Deep and Reality, Fiesta, . and Las Vegas in Harmony, demonstrating natural settings. Reprinted from Ranatunga 2018, 2017, 2024, and 2019

Case Study 1: Earth, Wind, Water and Fire

Long ago, people believed that there were four main elements (or fundamental/essential building blocks). Earth, Water, Air, and Fire made up the universe and explained patterns and changes in nature. This idea goes back to the Greek philosopher Empedocles in the 5th century BC. Ancient scholars such as Empedocles (c. 495-435 BCE), Plato (c. 427-347 BCE) didn't identify these elements as physical objects/matter but as symbols of different qualities of life. Earth represents solidity, stability and grounding, water represents fluidity, adaptability, and change, fire represents transformation, energy and passion, and air represents movement and freedom and communication (Paintner 4). These four elements Earth, Water, Air, and Fire were also found to be important in other cultures, such as in India and Japan and shaped their philosophies and spiritual beliefs (Bunker 25-32). The composition Earth, Wind, Water, and Fire by

Amaranath Ranatunga is a deeply expressive work that explores the powerful and essential natural elements. He aims to connect these forces to changes in life events and emotions through his use of extended techniques in the performance.

> "Earth is the base that all human beings, animals and plants stand on. Before the plants or animals came into existence the Earth was there. This art form expresses the value of Earth, Wind, Water and fire through a single (solo) guitar." ("Earth, Wind, Water & Fire by Amaranath Ranatunga")

In the opening moments of the video, Ranatunga clearly conveys his vision to the audience. The message he shares serves as a key to understanding the deeper purpose behind his composition. He describes the elements of Earth, Wind, Water, and Fire not merely as symbols of nature but as living forces that shape and influence human life. This repertoire highlights his inspiration to value the natural elements with significant characteristics of each and express it as a classical guitar performance along with his unique extended techniques.

He uses video footage of natural elements of Earth, Wind, Water and Fire in the visual. He starts his piece with an upward brush stroke extended technique producing a soft sound like a sweeping sound and the video. Ranatunga's playing is shown on the side of the screen, and his hand gestures combined with the visual of satellite view of earth and sound effects of the brush stroke extended technique convey a sense of lightness in space. Then he transitions to play arpeggios (playing the individual notes of a chord one at a time, rather than strumming them all together[8] alongside a view of the earth surface with natural landscapes such as mountains, valleys, fields which gives a slow and calm feeling through his music and rhythm. This allows the audience to feel the calmness and esthetic richness of the earth. Later his visuals shift towards an urban landscape with bridges, vehicles, roads and building, and he tries to show the shift from natural to man-made environment with rapid playing of notes indicating rapid changing nature, business of urban environment. He then slows the tempo of his play and

[8] Chord is a combination of three or more notes played on a guitar (Davis 1). Strumming is the technique of playing a string instrument with a sweeping action (Schyga 2019)

adjusts the loudness of the music to reflect calmer natural environments, allowing to support the mood of the visuals. As images of dry landscapes, such as deserts, appear, he incorporates an extended technique, which involves tapping the soundboard with alternating ring, middle, and index (a, m, i) fingers while playing melody notes. Gradually Ranatunga's performance intensifies, growing louder as the visuals shift to the harshness of natural disasters, such as sandstorms and hurricanes. Again, shifting to slower and calmer music showing earth's view from space.

Ranatunga's philosophy is deeply connected to the nature of life, which he expresses through his compositions. In this piece, he draws from ancient philosophical concepts of natural elements to reflect the changes and experiences of life. Just as the element of earth symbolizes stability, he conveys moments of balance and calm through serene, natural landscapes. In contrast, he represents life's instability and challenges by incorporating harsher environments such as deserts and urban settings. Additionally, to create non-conventional sounds and changing dynamics, he creates the feel and represents these environmental settings using his innovative use of extended techniques to enhance the expression of his ideas of life stability, making his message more impactful.

> "Wind, which moves from high pressure to low pressure in a soothing way and when the pressure difference is high it moves rapidly in an uncontrollable way. The artist expresses the soothing past of the Wind rather than its rough side." ("Earth, Wind, Water & Fire by Amaranath Ranatunga")

Ranatunga transitions to the next section, which he titles "Wind," by creating a tremolo effect. This is the rapid repetition of the same note produced by altering fingers of the right hand to create sustained shimmering sound which he identified as the key sound of wind to recreate the movement of wind. Tremolo effect has been extensively used in *Recuerdos de la* Alhambra by Francisco Tárrega to demonstrate natural elements (Bobri iv). Inspired by memories of the Alhambra, a palace in Spain, Tárrega interprets the flowing sounds of its water fountains through his delicate and continuous tremolo technique (Tindukasiri 76). This

section of the video starts with showing visuals of rotating the windmills and natural phenomenon movement of leaves, spider webs and grass with light breeze. He then creates a staccato effect: a series of short, detached, and distinct sounds (Carr 215), illustrating the transition from a gentle breeze to a stronger wind, where trees and grass begin to sway more rapidly. This transition from a gentle breeze to strong winds demonstrates the shift in the wind's movement from slow to rapid. He then plays a special extended technique a backward *rasgueado* by flicking the strings in reverse while simultaneously tapping the edge of the sound hole with his thumb(p) which produces a fluttering and rolling effect (Ranatunga 217). This creates an aggressive and violent nature which aligns with damage caused by heavy wind storms he demonstrates in the video.

Similar to the "Earth" section of the composition, "Wind" symbolizes the freedom and movement of life. Ranatunga begins this section with slow, smooth music, which gradually intensifies into an aggressive and violent effect as the wind transitions from a gentle breeze to a powerful storm. He highlights the distinct shifts in wind dynamics through changing the tempo and use of distinctive techniques (*tremolo* and backward rasgueado). His underlying message in this section emphasizes that freedom, movement, and communication in life are constantly evolving, subject to change through different phases. His ability to sonically recreate natural elements through the extended techniques of his guitar performance reflects his deep inspiration from environmental soundscapes.

> "The third part of the composition visualizes and express the value, the beauty and importance of water" ("Earth, Wind, Water & Fire by Amaranath Ranatunga")

Next, the video transitions to the element of water and correspondingly, Ranatunga begins his unique technique of three-stroke-tapping with the use of thumb (p) to represent the sound of flowing water hitting rocks in a stream as demonstrated in video visuals. He continues playing the same technique and a melody to illustrate the fluidity of water. He alternates between tapping and melody to accompany scenes of various water sources such as waterfalls and

lakes. As the imagery shifts to dams, his tempo increases, building intensity to show the sense of the massiveness of these dams and powerful, controlled and strength in holding water across a strong wall barrier. When the dam opens, the music captures the intense release not as a gentle flow, but a sudden, forceful rush emphasizing the energy and magnitude of the event. Finally, he portrays the seashore with a more melodious sound to reflect calmness, followed by a sudden rise in tempo and dynamics to capture the power of crashing tides.

Water symbolizes change and adaptability, and through his use of extended techniques, Ranatunga effectively illustrates these characteristics of water. He differentiates the visuals and his performance showing the serenity of lakes with the intensity of dams, the peacefulness of a calm seashore and power of crashing tides, illustrating water's ever-changing nature. He adds the sense of changing nature and fluidity of water by recreating the sound of crashing tides, flowing water in a lake hitting rocks and tries to deliver calmness and powerfulness through his use of extended techniques. Similarly, as life progresses, individuals must adapt to different stages, situations, and goals they encounter. Life is rarely predictable as it shifts in unexpected ways, presenting both challenges and opportunities. Water exists in nature in different forms from calmer streams to intense ocean tides, human experiences are shaped by constant change. The ability to adapt is not only key to personal growth but essential for survival in an ever-changing world. Recreating the soundscape of water, he connects his environment experience with the audience and shares his philosophy on life's continuous evolution.

> "Destructive face of 'Fire' such as wildfire of Amazon Rainforest in 2019, is visualized which convey the message that the man has to use Fire in an intelligent manner"
>
> ("Earth, Wind, Water & Fire by Amaranath Ranatunga")

In the final section, representing fire, Ranatunga begins with an outward rasgueado, flicking the strings in sequence with his ring (a), middle (m), and index

(i) fingers to replicate the crackling sound of burning wood as trapped moisture and gases expand and burst open in the images of the video. This scenery of the fireplace displays the sense of warmth, and his music creates a rhythmic effect recreating the soundscape of the fireplace. As the visuals progress to forest fires, the intensity of his playing increases, illustrating the destruction of events like the Amazon wildfires through variations of the same technique. To add an extra rhythmic dimension, he introduces his own single tap extended technique, which continues with rasgueado, he aims to induce the emotional intensity of the situation, allowing the audience to truly feel the sense of disaster. Through extended techniques Ranatunga creatively replicates the crackling sound of burning wood, natural sounds cannot be effectively captured through conventional note-based music. He utilizes the extended capabilities of his classical guitar to produce the soundscape of a fireplace including even that which might be perceived as noise or unpleasant sounds. As fire symbolizes transformation, passion, and the energy of life, this part of the composition illustrates that fire or the energy of life can evolve from a less intense fireplace which into wildfires, causing a more significant impact and in his message states fire should use intelligent manners. This reflects the idea that the energy we invest in life can lead to profound transformation.

Case Study 2: Beyond the Triangle

In another piece of video accompanied performance 'Beyond the Triangle' – Amaranath Ranatunga employs extended techniques that significantly connect with the visual environment. This piece led me to search on the connection with the use of extended technique to show his inspiration and connection to the environment. In his research article, he elaborates on the message behind this composition, encouraging us not to confine our thoughts, emotions, and concepts within a narrow framework but to explore beyond it. He is not an artist limited to conventional guitar playing but his journey is to explore more sounds to produce with his solo instrument classical guitar. Thus, he serves as a living example of his vision for his audience (Ranatunga 219).

The performance video starts with a wide shot of Amaranath Ranatunga holding the guitar and his playing in a natural background emphasizing that his performance takes place within a natural landscape. The key techniques he uses in the composition begins with tamboura and a repeated tap on the 15th fret of the fretboard to establish a resonant and percussive foundation. Then the video transitions with a pan camera movement from left to right while playing a progressive ascending melody to showcase main elements such as water pond, bridge, trees of this natural setting. This camera movement allows him to present a fuller view of the environment by adding more details to enhance the viewer's shared experience. As he mentioned in his article, he shows the difference of the changing mood in our daily life along with his variations of playing and visual elements where the water and trees appear still and lifeless, representing calm, quiet and isolation moods. In addition to visual demonstration of these elements, he tries to create a soundscape of the natural landscape. He incorporates the sound of birdsong as a keynote sound of the environment, as defined by R. Murray Schafer's Soundscape theory which serves as both a background layer and a foundational element to hear a liveliness in the composition and supports to enriches his guitar performance. His representation of changing moods of life using extended techniques and his facial expressions influenced by his natural setting. Researchers such as Reid, Reeve and Cutis mentions that artistic creations could be a one that represent nature, while others create art directly in natural settings. And researchers like Chine-Wen states that the surroundings of the artist, whether natural landscapes, urban settings or cultural context significantly impact their artist style to provide inspiration and unique perspectives. And they have identified the connection of artists' work to their environmental experiences and has a direct impact on the type and nature of their artistic work (Chin-Wen) which showcase in Ranatunga's composition.

Then the video shows a close shot to his both left- and right-hand gestures when Ranatunga plays hammer on technique along with tapping at the edge of the soundboard with the use of thumb (p) finger. This indicates sudden changes in mood in everyday life where one can experience a peaceful and relaxed mood

to intense and stressful mood when the sound changes from calm to intense tapping. Watching Ranatunga perform in his video by observing his body language and finger movements provides understanding into his techniques and emotional expression. This visual engagement enhances the listener's understanding of moods he tries creating and his immersive performance style beyond just hearing the music. Next, the screen slowly blends and transitions into natural landscape with a quicker pan camera movement followed by a melody. Then shows a visual of the waterfall with tilt down camera movement to show the water flowing from the waterfall which shows the life changes from calm gentle flow followed by fall from steeper end with a change in the flow and again start flowing in a flat-water flow. He tries to blend the sound of the waterfall along with his guitar melody as an addition to his soundscape. Then he shifts the visual to show to the larger water pond. Following this shift, composition enters a second variation that features a melody in the classical guitar style. Following up to the melodic section Ranatunga plays a unique technique in which the right-hand second finger plucks the strings at the 7th fret, creating tonal transition in the composition. The most striking section of the composition begins with a heavy double tap-plays with right hand thumb and remaining four fingers. The tamboura effect, achieved through thumb strikes, reinforced by a secondary tap on the 15th fret of the guitar.

In this composition, Amaranath Ranatunga uses extended techniques to build a strong connection between sound and the surrounding visual environment. He challenges traditional musical boundaries by exploring a broader range of sounds on the classical guitar, emphasizing the importance of thinking and feeling beyond limited frameworks. This interplay between sound and setting expresses his personal view of life's emotional journey. The visuals don't just support the performance, they improve the impact of his message and highlight how his environment inspires and shapes his musical expression.

Case Study 3: Echo in a Forest

The video ECHO IN A FOREST aims to share the echo of sounds of a dense forest filled with trees, and wildlife. As a classical guitar performer, Ranatunga expresses his moods and emotions through his music using innovative techniques, drawing inspiration from nature. Rather than simply creating background music, he aims to induce the atmosphere of a forest, immersing listeners in its ambience. Ranatunga uses extended classical guitar techniques to convey the atmospheric qualities of a dense forest, aiming to reflect its sonic complexity rather than merely recreating its sounds. The setting features tall trees and soft, filtered sunlight, creating a peaceful and immersive atmosphere. The natural lighting and green surroundings enhance the composition's focus on nature.

The performance video starts with a medium shot of Ranatunga with slight camera pan movement to the right side. This peaceful setting establishes an immediate connection to the forest environment, framing the performance as part of the natural landscape. In his playing he showcases with an extended tapping technique single tap like a tamboura effect strike near bridge with continuous variations while muting strings with the left hand. He uses a Close-up camera shot to show the technique. Then he tries to create the same effect with melodic structure and the video also shows the similar camera shot to the initial mid shot. This repeated passage with addition of melody later creates an echoing effect as echo is the reflection of a sound. This idea of "echo" has a deep meaning where different cultures and research talks about. This concept of "echo" aligns with Steven Feld's exploration of soundscapes in his work "From Ethnomusicology to Echo-Musicology: Reading R. Murray Schafer in The Papua New Guinea Rainforest." Feld studied the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea. He notes that their language and music are deeply connected to the natural sounds around them. The Kaluli term "gugu-gawgaw" describes how echoes travel, blending height and depth (Fled 156). Similarly, Ranatunga's composition adds layered sounds, melodic echoes, and rhythmic repetition to suggest how sound travels, resonates, and transforms within natural spaces. This effect reflects a deep connection between human expression and the natural world, where music and language

mirror the environment's sounds. The video in this performance is usually as a medium shot with slight camera pans movement. Then Ranatunga creates another new rhythm with use of single tap and left hand pull off technique. He further enhances the echoing effect, reflecting the dynamic and ever-changing nature of forest sounds. This rhythmic variation highlights the idea that, much like the diverse sounds in a forest, there is no singular way an echo can be seen, highlighting the complexity and richness of natural sounds. Then he plays a melodic passage along with the initial mute tapping creating and echo by alternatively repeating vibrations. He, with a descending melody, then repeats the first section with variations, incorporating triplets (Three notes) and rhythmic changes. He concludes the piece with his innovative techniques with rasgueado strums and harmonics, as echo is faded. This reflects the momentary nature of forest sound. As forest is not evolving as much as man-made environment implies repetitive nature of the composition.

Importantly, Ranatunga does not attempt to imitate environmental sounds directly. Instead, he expresses the feeling of being within a forest, creating a sonic experience that mirrors how echoes, rhythms, and moods shift in that space. His decision to perform in a natural setting rather than a concert hall is a key part of this message, highlighting not only his personal connection with nature but also how the environment itself becomes part of the performance. As he plays, the forest responds: his sound bounces off trees, birds may chirp in return, and the air carries away his music. In this way, Echo in a Forest becomes both a performance and a dialogue with the natural world.

Analysis of Ranatunga's three compositions reveals how he carefully uses extended techniques on the classical guitar to convey social and environmental messages while creating his unique playing style. He has used different artistic approaches such as recreating natural sounds, inspiration from environmental experience, blending natural sounds into his performance, using natural element characteristics to create music. His specialty is he does all these using a solo instrument classical guitar in the journey of creating his uniqueness using innovative extended techniques.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Amaranath Ranatunga is a Sri Lankan classical guitarist, and his work has been deeply influenced by some of the world's greatest composers and guitarists. His artistic philosophy has shaped both his creations and performances with the deep understanding of the classical guitar's many sound production capabilities. He recognized the immense potential of the classical guitar and used it as the sole instrument to compose his own orchestra. This innovative approach has allowed him to explore not only musical notes but also non-musical sounds, expanding the boundaries of the guitar.

Soundscapes and landscapes shape human perception, influencing emotions, memory, and artistic expression. Scholars like Schafer and Feld explore how everyday sounds become a part of human life. This sensory relationship highlights the deep connection between sound, sight, and cultural identity in music and life.

Amaranath Ranatunga draws inspiration from his sonic and visual surroundings to explore innovative techniques on the classical guitar, seamlessly incorporating them into his performances. The use of extended techniques showcases his exceptional guitar skills and invites the audience to experience a meaningful connection between music and nature. Ranatunga's journey of discovery shapes his unique extended techniques, constantly exploring new sound possibilities, allowing him to convey meaningful messages to society through his artistic work. Environmental experiences and nature inspiration shows his approach and significance of an artist's environment in shaping their creative expression and offers listeners a deeper understanding of the world around them.

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